Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-38 (canceled)

Claim 39 (new): A transgenic plant that is more tolerant to salt than a control plant, wherein:

the transgenic plant comprises a recombinant polynucleotide encoding a CCAAT-binding transcription factor that binds to a transcription regulating region of DNA comprising the motif CCAAT;

wherein the recombinant polynucleotide specifically hybridizes to the complement of the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 3 under conditions at least as stringent as:

5X SSC and 50% formamide at 42°C , followed by at least two wash steps of 0.2X SSC, 1% SDS at 65°C.

Claim 40 (new): The transgenic plant of Claim 39, wherein the wash steps comprise two wash steps of 0.1X SSC, 0.1% SDS at 65° C for 30 min for each step.

Claim 41 (new): The transgenic plant of claim 39, where the transgenic plant has greater cotyledon expansion than the control plant after growing for three days in the presence of 150 mM NaCl.

Claim 42 (new): The transgenic plant of Claim 39, wherein the CCAAT-binding transcription factor comprises:

Asn-$(Xaa)_4$-Lys-$(Xaa)_{33-34}$-Asn-Gly;

where Xaa is any amino acid residue.

Claim 43 (new): The transgenic plant of Claim 39, wherein said CAAT-binding transcription factor comprises SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 44 (new): The transgenic plant of Claim 39, wherein said recombinant polynucleotide comprises SEQ ID NO: 3.

Claim 45 (new): The transgenic plant of Claim 39, wherein expression of the CAAT-binding transcription factor is regulated by a constitutive, inducible, or tissue-specific promoter.

Claim 46 (new): The transgenic plant of Claim 39, wherein the transgenic plant is a transformed seed.

Claim 47 (new): A method for producing a transgenic plant having greater tolerance to salt than a control plant, the method steps comprising:

(a) providing a DNA construct comprising a polynucleotide encoding a CCAAT-binding transcription factor that binds to a transcription regulating region of DNA comprising the motif CCAAT;

wherein the recombinant polynucleotide specifically hybridizes to the complement of the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 3 under conditions at least as stringent as 5X SSC and 50% formamide at 42°C , followed by at least two wash steps of 0.2X SSC, 1% SDS at 65°C;

(b) introducing the expression vector into a plant cell;

(c) growing the plant cell into the transgenic plant;

(d) germinating a seed from the transgenic plant, and

(e) selecting a transgenic progeny plant that is more tolerant to salt than the control plant from a pool of plants treated according to steps (a)-(d).

Claim 48 (new): The method of Claim 47, the method steps further comprising:

(f) crossing said transgenic progeny plant with itself or another plant;

(g) selecting a second seed that develops as a result of said crossing; and

(h) growing from the second seed a second progeny plant having greater tolerance to salt than the control plant.

Claim 49 (new): The method of Claim 47, wherein the wash steps comprise two wash steps of 0.1X SSC, 0.1% SDS at 65° C for 30 min for each step.

Claim 50 (new): The method of claim 47, where the transgenic plant has greater cotyledon expansion than the control plant after growing for three days in the presence of 150 mM NaCl.

Claim 51 (new): The method of Claim 47, wherein the CCAAT-binding transcription factor comprises:

Asn-$(Xaa)_4$-Lys-$(Xaa)_{33-34}$-Asn-Gly;

where Xaa is any amino acid residue.

Claim 52 (new): The method of Claim 47, wherein said CAAT-binding transcription factor comprises SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 53 (new): The method of Claim 47, wherein said recombinant polynucleotide comprises SEQ ID NO: 3.

Claim 54 (new): The method of Claim 47, wherein expression of the CAAT-binding transcription factor is regulated by a constitutive, inducible, or tissue-specific promoter.

Claim 55 (new): A method for increasing the tolerance of a transgenic plant to salt, the method steps comprising:

(a) providing a DNA construct comprising a polynucleotide encoding a CCAAT-binding transcription factor that binds to a transcription regulating region of DNA comprising the motif CCAAT;

wherein the recombinant polynucleotide specifically hybridizes to the complement of the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 3 under conditions at least as stringent as 5X SSC and 50% formamide at 42°C , followed by at least two wash steps of 0.2X SSC, 1% SDS at 65°C;

(b) introducing the expression vector into a plant cell;

(c) growing the plant cell into the transgenic plant that is more tolerant to salt than a control plant.

Claim 56 (new): The method of Claim 55, the method steps further comprising:

(d) crossing said transgenic plant with itself or another plant;

(e) selecting a seed that develops as a result of said crossing; and

(f) growing a progeny plant from the seed,

thus producing a transgenic progeny plant having greater tolerance to salt than the control plant.

Claim 57 (new): The method of Claim 55, wherein the wash steps comprise two wash steps of 0.1X SSC, 0.1% SDS at 65° C for 30 min for each step.

Claim 58 (new): The transgenic plant of claim 55, where the transgenic plant has greater cotyledon expansion than the control plant after growing for three days in the presence of 150 mM NaCl.

Claim 59 (new): The method of Claim 55, wherein said CAAT-binding transcription factor comprises SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 60 (new): The method of Claim 55, wherein said recombinant polynucleotide comprises SEQ ID NO: 3.

Claim 61 (new): The method of Claim 55, wherein expression of the CAAT-binding transcription factor is regulated by a constitutive, inducible, or tissue-specific promoter.